

2. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

2.3 READING TALL BUILDINGS STRATEGY

SENSITIVE VIEWS

View 11: From Dunsden Way, South of Dunsden Green;

The introduction of further built form, particularly tall, large blocks would further erode the rural character. The view has a high sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings to the skyline.

*source: reading Tall Buildings Strategy



View 14: From Balmore Park.

Consideration should be given to how any proposed tall buildings respond to the existing tall buildings, and to how the skyline would be viewed as a whole. Although true of all viewpoints, this is particularly true in this instance due to the elevated and panoramic nature of the view.

*source: reading Tall Buildings Strategy



2. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

2.4 READING STATION AREA FRAMEWORK (RSAF)

KEY PRINCIPLES

The RSAF sets out its own principles to complement those presented in the Local Plan.

These principles are developed for the particular context of the Station Area and intend to establish a framework for future developments.

The following are quotes of the set principles extracted from the Reading Station Area Framework 2010:

A vital and enjoyable place

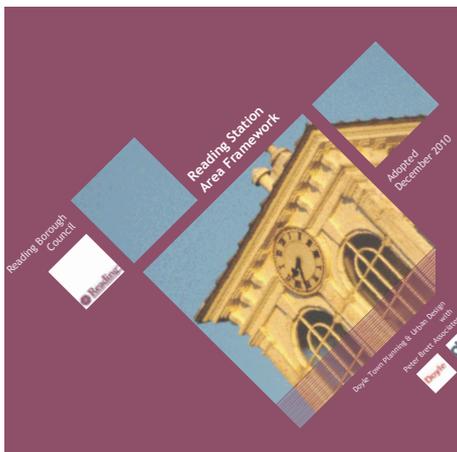
3.3 Redevelopment provides the opportunity to secure vibrant retail and leisure uses, to help make the Station Area an enjoyable place to work and live in and to visit. Street level retail, hotels, cafés, bars and restaurants and other sport, leisure and recreational uses will provide activity throughout the day and evening.

A place to work

3.4 The strategic location of the Station Area and its direct proximity to the town centre and the Station represents a unique opportunity to build upon the success of the town centre and create a substantial commercial development of new high-quality flexible office space. Business and employment development will make a significant contribution towards Reading's established position as the 'Capital of the Thames Valley'.

A place to live

3.5 The creation of a mixed-use quarter which incorporates a substantial element of new housing is fundamental to the development of a sustainable mixed use area. The area can accommodate a significant level of new homes of mixed tenure, responsive to local housing needs. The proximity to public transport facilities makes it an ideal location for high-density living, not dependent on car travel. New community facilities can benefit existing residents as well as future occupiers.





A well connected and accessible place

3.6 The redevelopment of large sites provides the opportunity to secure landscaped public space and to extend public access. The layout of these will incorporate East-West and North-South routes to enhance movement and linkages across the area. Linking the area to Christchurch Meadows will further integrate and ensure good accessibility to adjoining open spaces.



A place to value

3.7 The Station Area will contain buildings and development of outstanding architectural merit and design innovation, creating a unique sense of place which responds to the character of the historic town centre and adjoining residential areas.



A highly sustainable place

3.8 New development should address the growing need for sustainable design, construction and lifestyles briefly outlined in this framework and in more detail in the LDF sustainability policies and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD.



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2.4 READING STATION AREA FRAMEWORK (RSAF)

PUBLIC REALM

The RSAF contains guidance aimed at improving the Station Area public realm by connecting the areas important for public space provision and connectivity.

The site includes designated zones 3: Kennet-Thames Spine, and 5: Vastern Road; and fronts the zone to the north on the northern exit of Reading Station.

The following are extracts from the document listing the principles:

- 'Stitching' together the various development sites within the Area, both visually and physically.
- Unifying the area through a coordinated design approach that utilises the best contemporary modern materials and street furniture.
- Creating an environment that is busy, overlooked and safe through its relationship with adjoining buildings ('passive surveillance').
- Contributing to the character and identity of the town centre, helping to instil a strong sense of place and underpinning investment.
- Creating more opportunities for sustainable forms of transport, particularly walking and cycling, by enhancing the connectivity and legibility of the area.

*source: RSAF 2010



RSAF extract. Public Realm priorities

Zone 3. Kennet-Thames spine

This link is described as vital for the success of the redevelopment of this area, seen as the main connection from the historic core through the Station Area and extending to the Thames.

A condensed set of guidelines is provided to complement the vision for this area's future development:

The spine will include enhancements including wider pavements and greater pedestrian priority in Station Road. North of the railway, the spine will incorporate a 'green link' towards the river. Buildings will face onto the spine rather than away from it, and, on all parts of the spine South of Vastern Road, the frontages will be enlivened with active uses including retail and leisure.

*source: RSAF 2010



Zone 5. Vastern Road

Currently used as a by-pass, RSAF envisions this road as a potential avenue through planting strategies and traffic control methods:

Potential changes to Vastern Road could reduce the dominance of speeding traffic and transform the character of the road from a by-pass at the edge of the town centre into a tree-lined avenue as a central element of the town centre public realm, by planting in the central reservation and creating planted verges.

*source: RSAF 2010



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2.4 READING STATION AREA FRAMEWORK (RSAF)

DENSITY AND MASS

The document defines guidelines for future developments, referring to massing and height.

The purpose of the density ranges is to enable assumptions on development impact. They are not prescriptive, but provide indications to local strategies and expectations.

The site includes defined plots: N3, N4, N5 and N6. Density for these plots is seen as a gradient starting along Caversham Road and rising along Vastern Road towards plot N6.

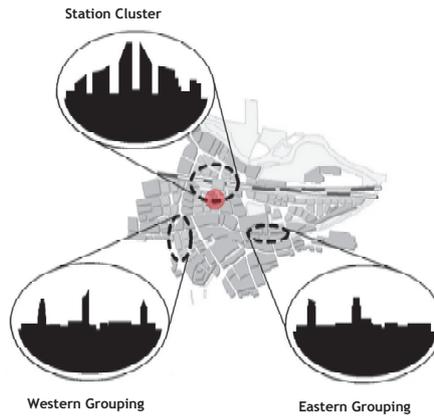
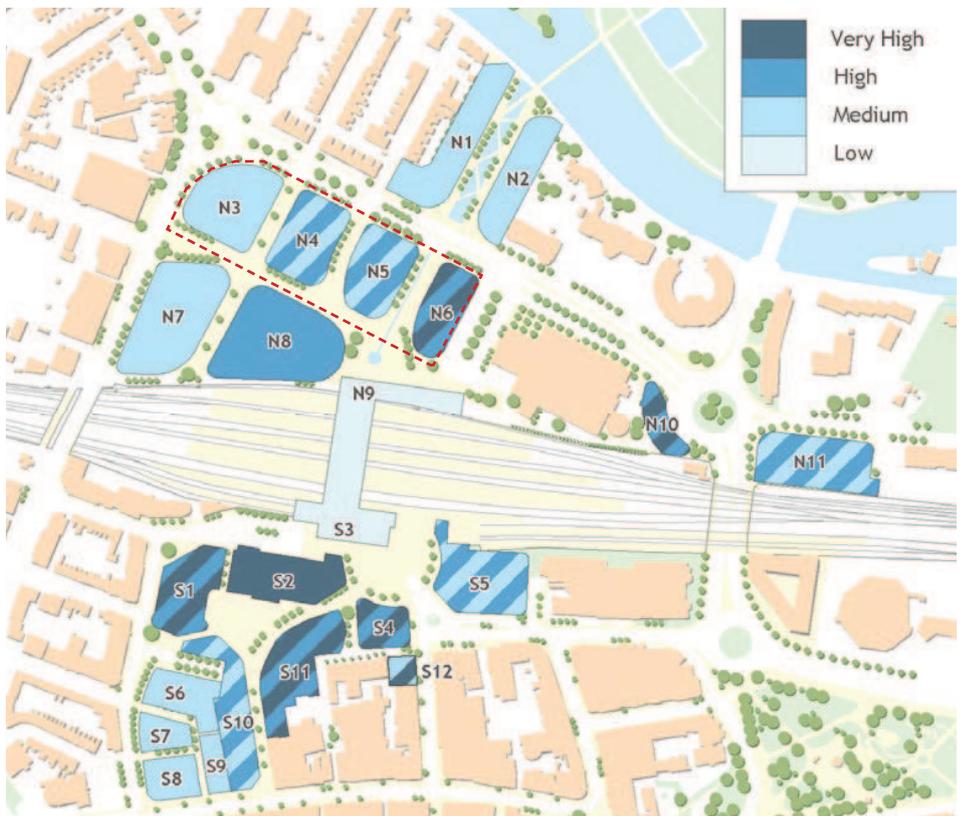


Figure 6.1 Diagrammatic indicative representation of the Station Cluster (Adopted RCAAP).



Figure 6.2 Locations potentially appropriate for tall buildings under RCAAP policy RC13

----- application boundary



RSAF. Density indications

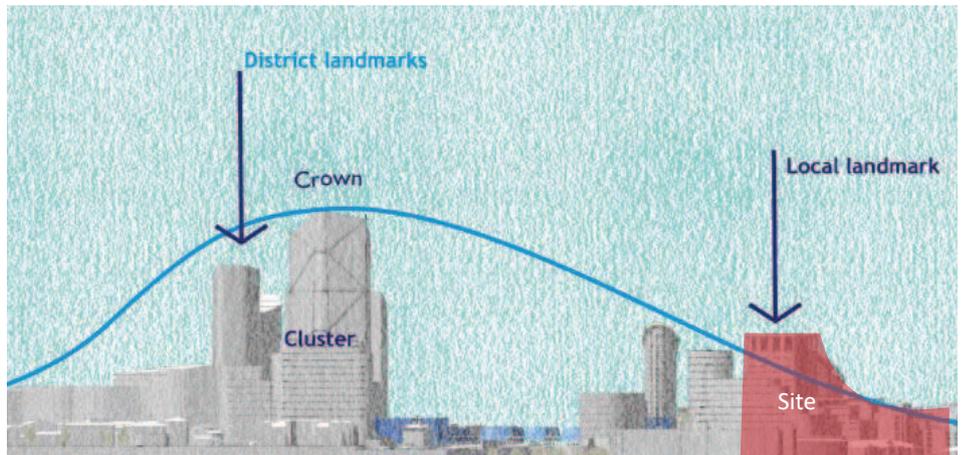
The site is considered appropriate for high density with a recommended provision of the area's Local Landmark. This is expected to be:

Tall or prominent buildings above ten storeys which are nevertheless clearly subordinate and therefore lower than district landmarks. (RSAF 2010)

In terms of massing, the prescriptive hierarchy describes buildings rising up around the Station.

The stated intention is to create a new distinctive skyline to complement the central area. The area considered appropriate for provision of maximum height is named the 'crown' and sits South of the station, within the development of Station Hill. All other developments are expected to be subordinate.

Within the area to the North of the Station, the plot considered appropriate for providing the Local Landmark is located on the proposal site and marked N6.



----- application boundary



RSAF. Plot delimitation

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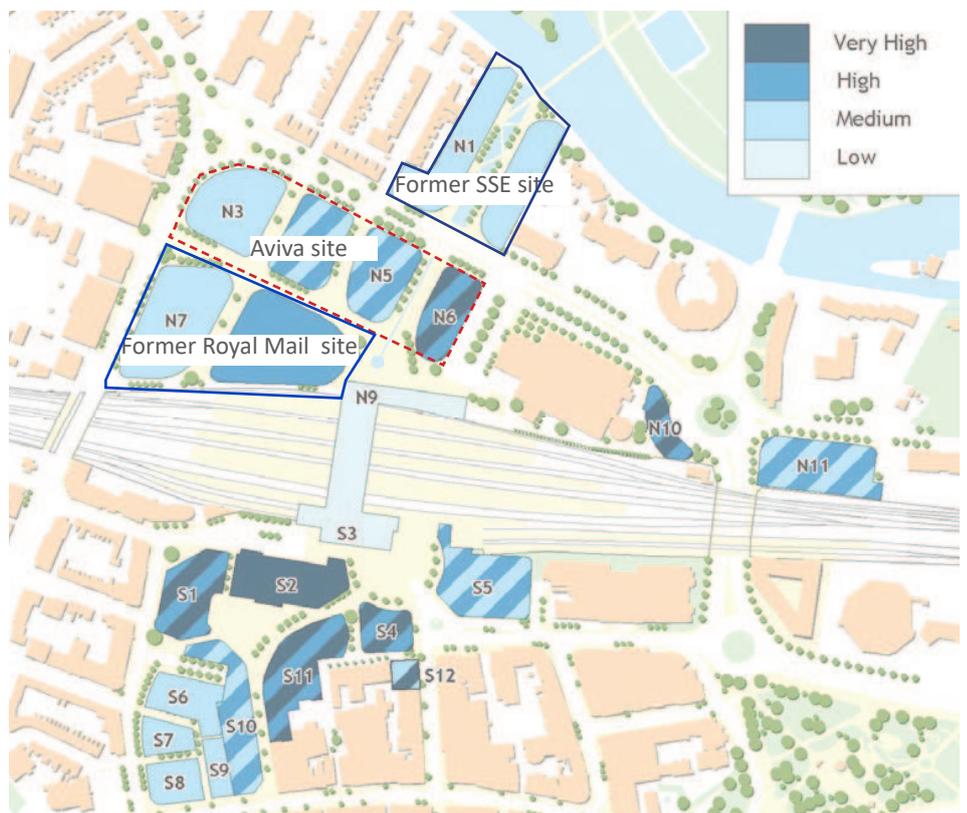
2.4 READING STATION AREA FRAMEWORK (RSAF)

DENSITY AND MASS

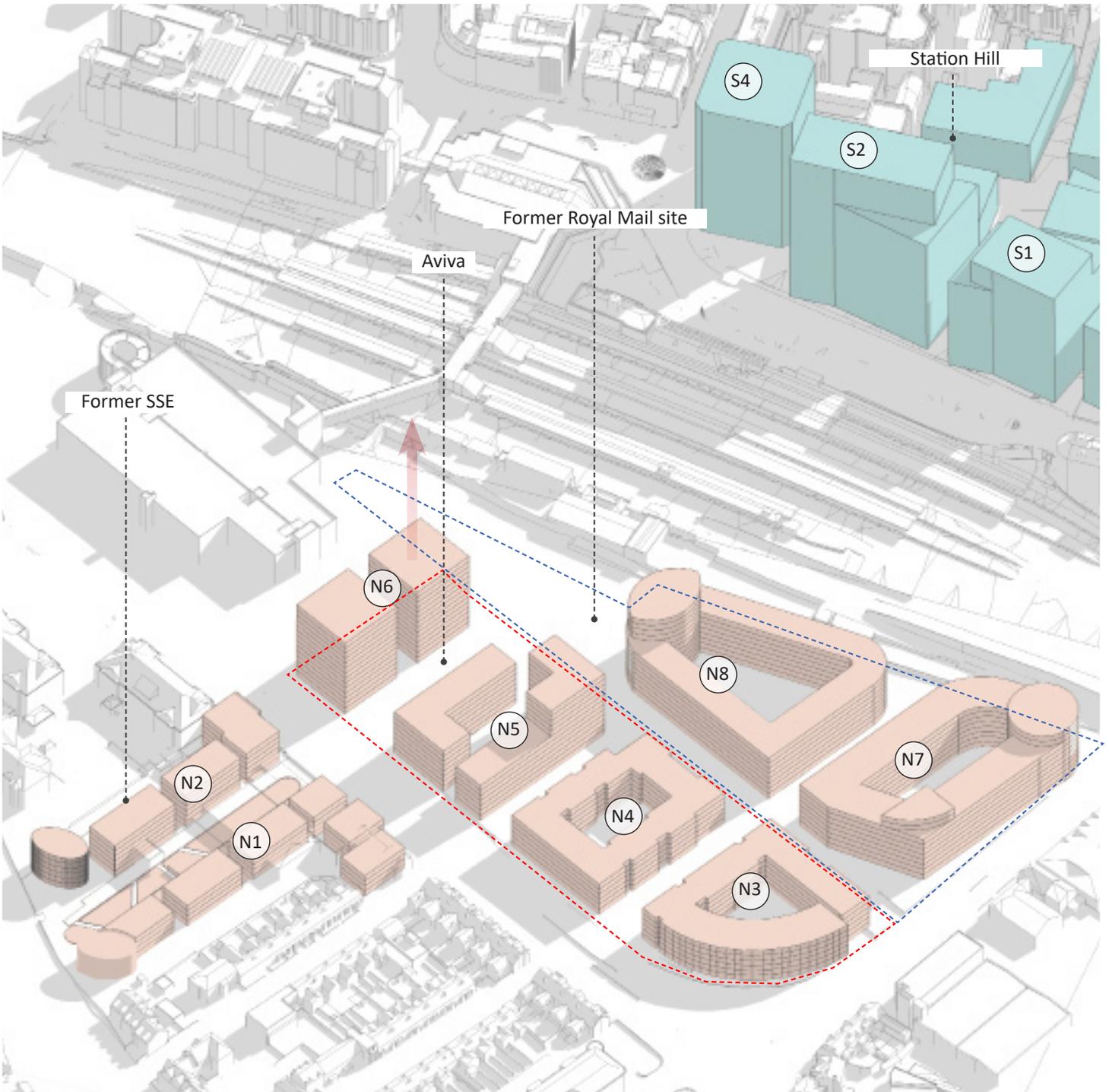
Within the RSAF document, an illustrative scheme is presented as a guideline as to how the outline principles could help shape future developments for the three key sites.

A three-dimensional illustration was produced for this document (shown on the opposite page).

Plot reference	Benchmark	Landmark
N1	4	None
N2	6	None
N3	6	None
N4	7	Local
N5	8	Local
N6	*	Local
N7	6	None
N8	8	Local
N9	6	None
N10	8	Local
N11	8	Local
S1	*	Local
S2	*	District
S3	4	None
S4	*	Local
S5	6	Local
S6	6	None
S7	6	None
S8	6	None
S9	6	None
S10	8	Local**
S11	8	District**
S12	*	Local



RSAF. Density indications



3D illustration of RSFA indicative scheme

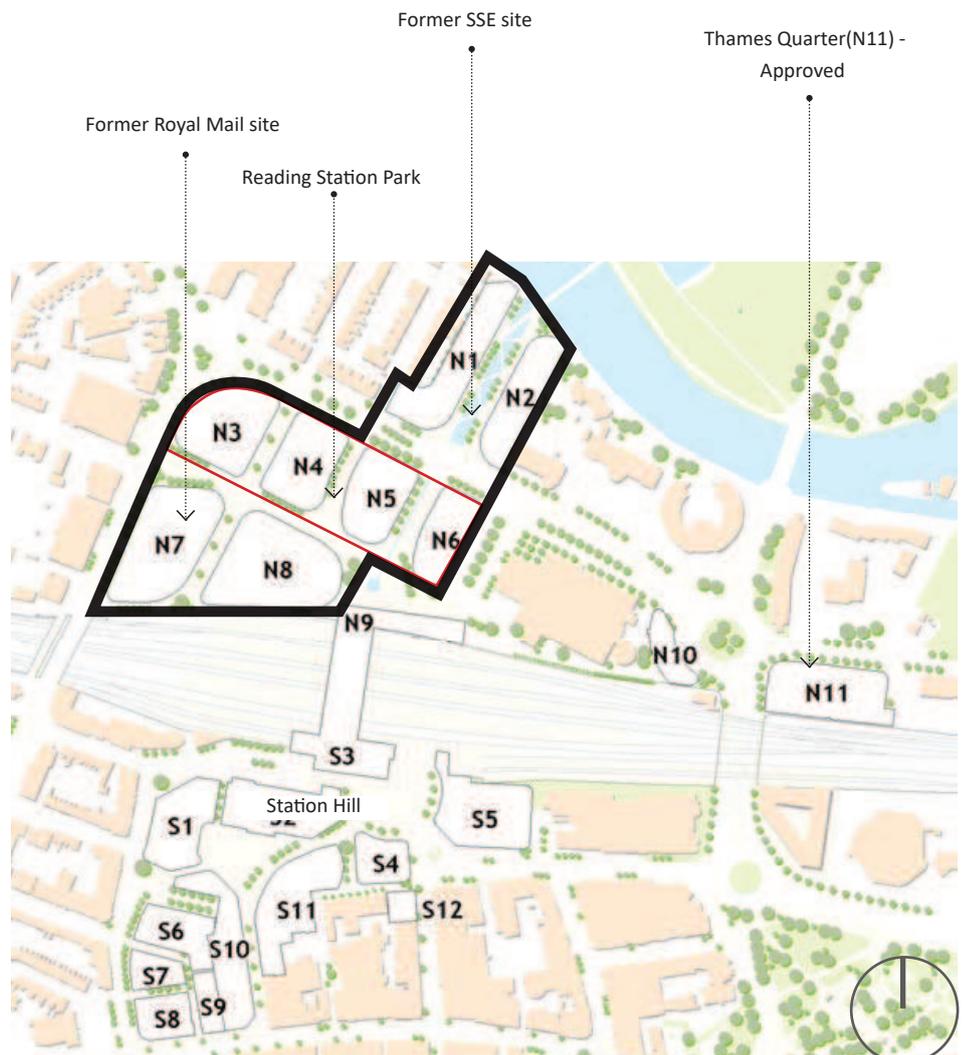
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2.5 EMERGING CONTEXT

LOCAL PLANNING GUIDANCE AND EMERGING CONTEXT

The three sites north of the railway tracks where development proposals are emerging, are in different ownerships and development stages.

Any scheme coming forwards should respond to both the local framework principles and to the changing context.



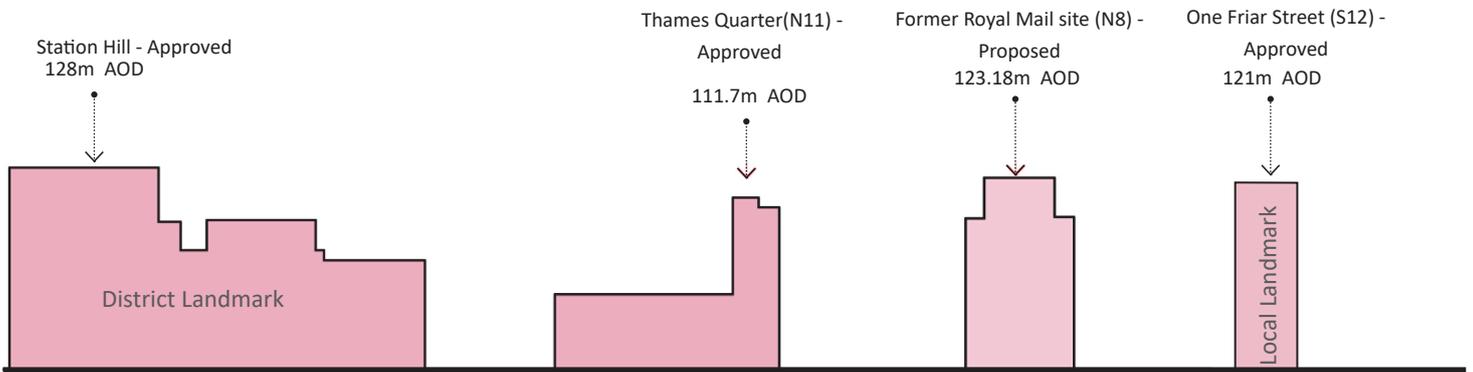
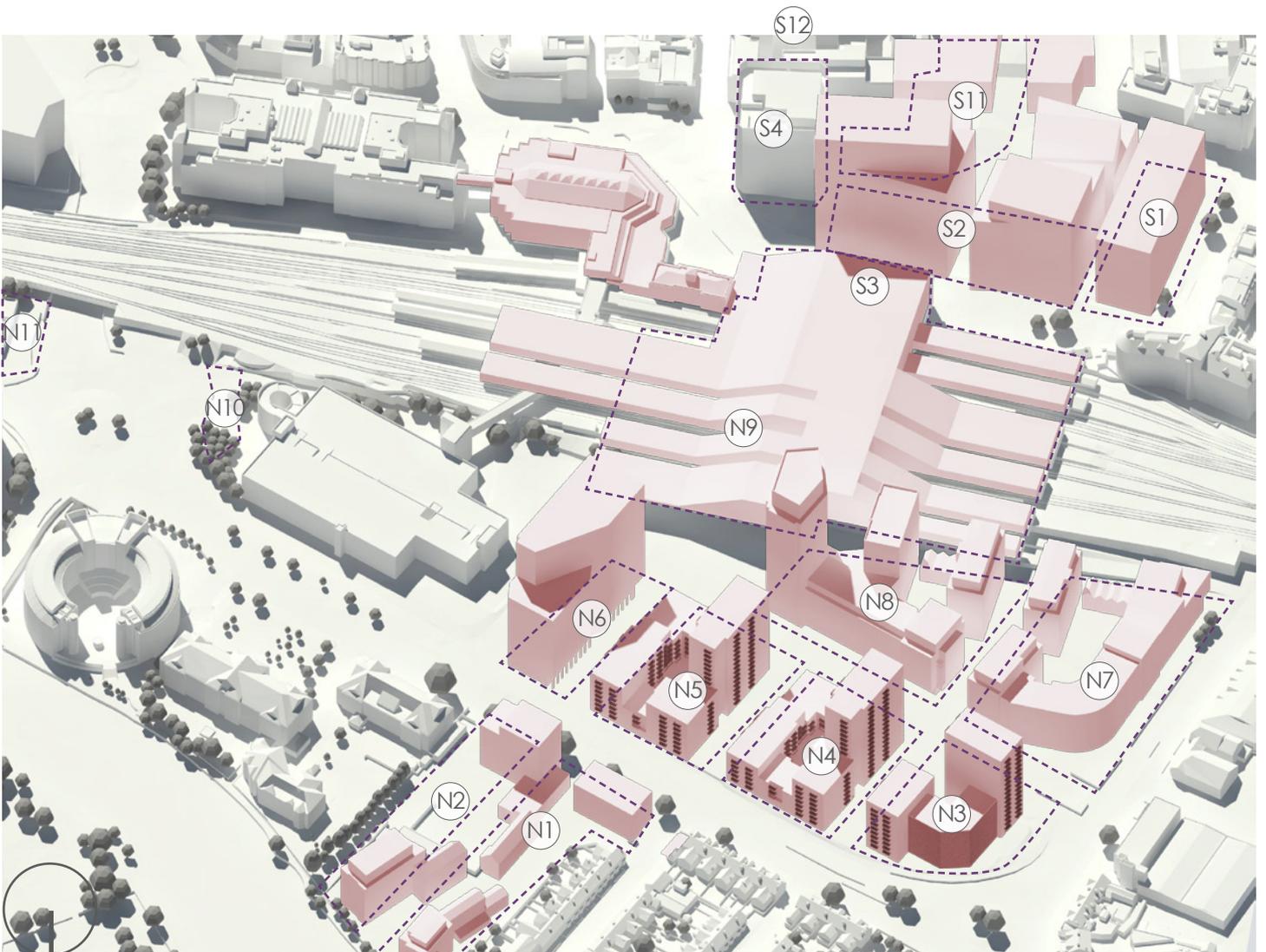


Diagram showing relationships between the District Landmark and subordinate tall buildings (proposed and approved)



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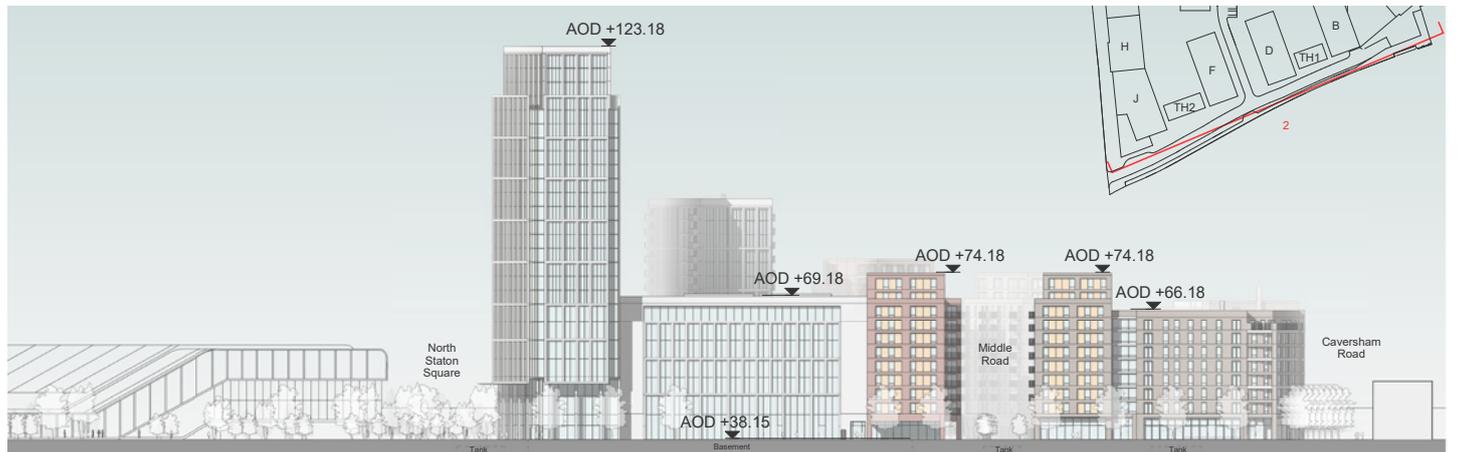
2.5 EMERGING CONTEXT

FORMER ROYAL MAIL SITE

In 2019, an Outline Planning Application was submitted for the Former Royal Mail site.



RSAF. Density indications



2019 Outline Planning Application

FORMER SSE SITE

A Detailed Planning Application for the redevelopment of the Former SSE site is currently under preparation.



RSAF. Density indications



Public Consultation Illustrations.



Public Consultation Illustrations.

3. SITE EVALUATION

3.1 URBAN GRAIN

The site sits within an area that is mostly occupied by medium to large developments. The fine residential grain lies further North-West and it is severely separated from the site by the major transport route, Vastern Road.

The railway station, warehouses (South), the office buildings facing the River Thames and the station's car park building (located East of the site) contrast against the tight residential grain to the North of the site.

According to the Reading Tall Buildings Strategy:
The building blocks have a large floor space, although the buildings are not high rise and there is extensive car parking adjacent to the buildings. These features combine to create a medium scale townscape.

— Site Boundary
— Character Area 22

